

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 EURE-00 OES-07 EB-07
/092 W

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P R 221737Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9257
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION NATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 10431

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, GW
SUBJECT: SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT WINS ANOTHER BUNDESTAG
VOTE

REF: BONN 10163

BEGIN SUMMARY: FOLLOWING LAST WEEK'S NARROW VICTORY ON
THE TAX BILL, THE SPD/FDP COALITION GAVE ITSELF A MAJOR
PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST ON JUNE 21 WHEN IT DEFEATED A CDU/
CSU CENSURE MOTION AGAINST CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT. THIS
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VOTE SHOWED THAT THE COALITION CAN HOLD ALL ITS MEMBERS
IN LINE, AND THUS IT REAFFIRMED SPD/FDP COMMAND OF AN
ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN THE BUNDESTAG. ALL SIGNS SUGGEST
THAT THE COALITION WILL WIN THE MANY BUDGET VOTES IN
THE BUNDESTAG THIS WEEK, DESPITE PERSISTENT NEGATIVE
VOTES BY THE CDU/CSU. MORE TROUBLESOME FOR THE
COALITION IS THE SPD'S INTERNAL PLIGHT, ENHANCED BY A

NEW FEUD BETWEEN FRAKTION CHIEF WEHNER AND PARTY CHAIRMAN BRANDT. THE IMPENDING SUMMER RECESS WILL BRING ONLY PARTIAL RELIEF FROM THAT PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. BOTH THE SPD/FDP COALITION AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT WON A MAJOR VICTORY IN THE BUNDESTAG ON JUNE 21, BY DEFEATING WITH A 253-243 VOTE THE CDU/CSU MOTION TO CENSURE SCHMIDT FOR HIS ROLE AS FINANCE MINISTER IN 1973/1974. THE OPPOSITION BASED ITS MOTION ON A RECENT DECISION BY THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTIONAL COURT IN KARLSRUHE WHICH HAD HELD THAT CERTAIN EXPENDITURES, MADE BY SCHMIDT AT THE END OF THE BUDGET YEAR WITHOUT BUNDESTAG APPROVAL, HAD VIOLATED THE CONSTITUTION.

A. THE OPPOSITION EFFORT TO CENSURE SCHMIDT IN EFFECT STRENGTHENED COALITION BONDS WHICH HAD BEEN FRAYED IN THE RECENT DEBATE OVER THE TAX BILL (REFTEL). THE SPD AND FDP SEIZED ON THE CHANCE TO MAKE THIS VOTE A TEST OF CONFIDENCE IN SCHMIDT AND IN THEIR COALITION. BOTH PARTIES TURNED OUT EVERY DEPUTY FOR THIS VOTE, AS DID THE OPPOSITION. THE RESULTING VICTORY GAVE THE COALITION A NEEDED PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST, BY REAFFIRMING SPD/FDP COOPERATION AND COMMAND OF AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY (249 VOTES) IN THE BUNDESTAG.

B. WE NOTE, FOR THE RECORD, THAT THE BUNDESTAG HAS CONFIDENTIAL

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NEVER PASSED A MOTION OF CENSURE. EVEN IF PASSED, SUCH A MOTION WOULD HAVE NO PRACTICAL EFFECT. IT WOULD REPRESENT AT MOST A MORAL REPROOF. THAT WAS, HOWEVER, A DEFEAT WHICH THE SPD/FDP COALITION, BATTERED IN RECENT WEEKS, COULD ILL AFFORD AND WHICH IT WAS DETERMINED TO AVOID.

2. THE BUNDESTAG IS NOW IN THE FINAL WEEK BEFORE SUMMER RECESS. BY FRIDAY, IT MUST VOTE ON A NUMBER OF INDIVIDUAL BUDGET PROPOSALS, AND ON THE FINAL BUDGET PACKAGE. THOUGH THE CDU/CSU WILL VOTE AGAINST THESE MEASURES, ALL SIGNS SUGGEST THAT THE SPD/FDP COALITION WILL BRING ITS BUDGET SUCCESSFULLY THROUGH THE BUNDESTAG. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, A FEW VOTES WHICH MAY GIVE PROBLEMS.

A. THE CDU/CSU HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL VOTE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED DEFENSE BUDGET ON JUNE 23. HERETOFORE, THE OPPOSITION HAS USUALLY SUPPORTED SOCIAL-LIBERAL DEFENSE BUDGETS, ON THE GROUNDS OF COMMON NATIONAL INTEREST. PROMPTED BY THE CSU, HOWEVER, THE UNION HAS DECIDED THIS YEAR TO OPPOSE THE DEFENSE

BUDGET PROPOSAL ON TWO GROUNDS: (1) DISSATIS-
FACTION WITH DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER (E.G., THE VARIOUS
"GENERALS AFFAIRS"), AND (2) UNHAPPINESS WITH THE NEW
MILITARY SERVICE LAW (WHICH OFFERS CONSCIENTIOUS
OBJECTORS AN EASY OUT AND WHICH THE UNION PLANS TO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 10431

CHALLENGE IN KARLSRUHE). SPD/FDP CIRCLES CLAIM THEY
HAVE THE VOTES TO PASS THIS BUDGET BUT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT
A FEW SPD DEPUTIES MAY DEFECT.

B. VOTES ON THE BUDGET FOR THE RESEARCH AND
TECHNOLOGY MINISTRY, AND ON THE ENTIRE BUDGET, MAY ALSO
TEMPT A FEW COALITION DEPUTIES TO OPPOSE OR TO ABSTAIN,

WHETHER OUT OF OPPOSITION TO NUCLEAR ENERGY,
UNHAPPINESS WITH THEIR LEADERSHIPS OR SOME OTHER REASON.
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AGAIN, COALITION SOURCES HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE THAT THESE
BUDGETS WILL PASS, BUT PERHAPS WITH A SMALLER MARGIN
THAN THAT WHICH THEY ACHIEVED IN DEFEATING THE CENSURE
MOTION YESTERDAY.

3. UNHAPPILY FOR THE SPD, ITS BUNDESTAG SUCCESS HAS NOT
RELIEVED ITS INTERNAL STRIFE. TO THE CONTRARY: LAST
WEEK'S HAIR-THIN VICTORY ON THE TAX BILL LED TO A FEW
BACKBITING POST-MORTEMS BY SEVERAL DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

A. MOST TROUBLESOME FOR THE SPD WAS THE PUBLIC
RE-EMERGENCE OF THE WEHNER-BRANDT FEUD. IN A WEEKEND
SPEECH BEFORE AN SPD AUDIENCE, THE CRUSTY FRAKTION CHIEF
ERUPTED WITH A SCATHING ATTACK ON HIS PARTY "LEADER-
SHIP" (HE DID NOT MENTION BRANDT BY NAME) WHICH HAD
FAILED TO INFORM ITS MEMBERS AS TO WHAT WAS INVOLVED IN
THE STRUGGLE OVER THE TAX BILL OR IN THE COALITION
AGREEMENT WITH THE FDP. BRANDT REPLIED WITH A PUBLIC
STATEMENT WHICH IN EFFECT ACCUSED WEHNER OF AN
INTEMPERANCE THAT UNDERMINED EFFORTS TO HOLD THE SPD
TOGETHER. IN YESTERDAY'S DEBATE, BOTH MEN TRIED TO BURY
THE HATCHET, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT DIFFERENCES REMAIN.
THEIR FEUD HAS DEEP ROOTS AND WILL CONTINUE TO TROUBLE
THE SPD.

B. MOREOVER, THE IMPENDING BUNDESTAG SUMMER
RECESS (JUNE 27-SEPTEMBER 3), WILL GIVE THE SPD ONLY
PARTIAL RELIEF IN COPING WITH ITS IN-HOUSE DISSIDENTS.
FOR ONE THING, THE PARTY MUST FIND BETTER WAYS TO
CONVINCE ITS RESTLESS BACKBENCHERS THAT THE FDP TAIL
DOES NOT FOREVER WAG THE SPD DOG IN THIS COALITION.
(THE DEBATE OVER THE TAX BILL STRENGTHENED THAT
SENTIMENT.) ALSO, SPD LEADERS ARE WAGING A CONTINUAL
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FIGHT AGAINST A FERVENT (AND PERHAPS CONTAGIOUS) BELIEF,
SO FAR HELD BY RELATIVELY FEW MEMBERS IN THE FRAKTION,
THAT THE SPD SHOULD LEAVE THE GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO
REGAIN ITS "SOCIALIST" HERITAGE AND "PURIFY" ITSELF.

C. THE FDP HAS BEEN AN UNEASY SPECTATOR TO THIS
STRIFE IN ITS PARTNER'S RANKS. SEVERAL DAYS AGO, FDP

CHAIRN GENSCHER ISSUED A STATEMENT CALLING FOR AN END TO THE BICKERING WHICH IS ERODING THE SOCIAL-LIBERAL COALITION. BEFORE THE JUNE 21 VOTE, HE PUBLICLY PLEDGED THAT THE FDP WILL REMAIN A RELIABLE COALITION PARTNER FOR THE SAKE OF BOTH IMPLEMENTING THE COALITION AGREEMENT AND DEFEATING THE OPPOSITION'S CENSURE MOTION.

4. NO ONE DENIES A RESIDUE OF TENSION AND ILL-WILL IN THE SOCIAL-LIBERAL COALITION. RECENTLY, THE GERMAN PRESS HAS DONE ITS BEST TO REFLECT AND/OR TO MAGNIFY THIS CONDITION, WITH STORIES WHICH INSINUATE THAT A NEW GRAND COALITION IS IN THE OFFING. WEHNER AND STRAUSS, AND SCHMIDT AND STRAUSS, HAVE ROUTINELY DENIED REPORTS OF SECRET MEETINGS BETWEEN THEM. WHATEVER THEIR VALIDITY (WHICH IS HIGHLY SUSPECT), THESE STORIES ONLY FEED THE CLIMATE OF NERVOUSNESS WHICH SURROUNDS THE COALITION.

5. WE HAVE NOTED BEFORE THAT THE SPD/FDP GOVERNMENT CAN TAKE SOME CONSOLATION FROM THE PROBLEMS WITHIN THE CAMP OF THE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION. THERE, THINGS ARE ALSO IN FERMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, KURT BIEDENKOPF RECENTLY RAISED A FEW UNION HACKLES WITH REMARKS WHICH CHASTISED HIS PARTY FOR FAILING TO RETHINK ITS POLICIES AND WHICH CLAIMED THAT GENSCHER COULD SERVE AS WELL IN A CDU-DOMINATED CABINET AS IN THE PRESENT ONE. MANY IN THE CDU BELIEVE STRONGLY THAT HIS PUBLIC COMMENTS WERE BOTH ILL-TIMED AND HARMFUL. FINALLY, THE CDU AND CSU ARE MAINTAINING THEIR STANDOFF OVER THE JOINT STRATEGY

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COMMISSION. THE COMMISSION WILL HOLD ITS FIRST MEETING IN EARLY JULY, AND THEN ADJOURN UNTIL FALL.

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